



C. Earl Hunter, Commissioner

Promoting and protecting the health of the public and the environment

November 3, 2008

The South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) invites you to the first meeting of the South Carolina Pandemic Influenza Ethics Task Force on Wednesday, November 19, 2008. This Task Force is being formed to provide a forum for discussion of ethical issues in pandemic influenza planning and preparedness.

Formation of this Task Force follows growing statewide interest in these issues and is further prompted by the July 2008 Summit of the States: Confronting the Ethics of Pandemic Influenza Planning. Attached please find the communiqué from this Summit, which was attended by several South Carolina professionals who will provide further information and participate in this Task Force.

You have been invited to serve as a member of this Task Force as a professional or lay person from South Carolina with expertise and interest in these areas. A Task Force Steering Committee met during October and determined some specific pandemic influenza ethical issues for which guidelines should be developed. Our hope is to have a statewide Summit in the summer of 2009 and produce a white paper outlining guidance for major ethical issues of concern.

The issues that will be addressed include: clinical practice and patient care issues addressing allocation of scarce resources such as hospital beds, ventilators and personal protective equipment; triage of patients; palliative care; public health measures to reduce spread of influenza; legal issues; and risk communication. At the Task Force meeting in November, you will be asked to volunteer to provide assistance and expertise in one of these work groups.

The November Pandemic Influenza Ethics Task Force meeting will be held in conjunction with the State Pandemic Influenza Coordinating Council on Wednesday, November 19, 2008, at the South Carolina Hospital Association beginning at 10:00 and lasting until approximately 3:00 p.m. The SC Hospital Association is located at 1000 Center Point Road, Columbia, SC 29210, off Fernandina Road at St. Andrew's Road exit, I-26 west of Columbia (see attached directions). Lunch and arrangements for mileage reimbursement will be provided. This Task Force will be supported by staff and funding from DHEC under a 1-year pan flu grant from the CDC.

Please reply to this invitation by Friday, November 12 by calling Phyllis Beasley at 803-898-4557 or by email at beaslepa@dhec.sc.gov, or Donna Culbreath at 803-898-3785, or by email at Culbredd@dhec.sc.gov. In order for us to provide sufficient lunches for attendees it is imperative that you RSVP. Thank you for your support of and participation in this important endeavor.

Sincerely,

R. Max Learner, Ph.D., Director
Office of Public Health Preparedness.

RML:pab

Attachment